



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY ICE AGENTS LAUDED FOR WORK ON DRUG, ORGANIZED CRIME CASES

28 ICE agents were among the 148 law enforcement officials recognized in the region

NEW YORK — Twenty-eight U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were among the 148 law enforcement officials honored yesterday at 26 Federal Plaza for their work on 12 separate investigations undertaken as part of the New York/New Jersey Region Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

Of the 12 investigations for which the investigators and prosecutors were recognized, three were ICE-led cases, three were joint cases, and four were led by other agencies with ICE participation. The ICE-led cases include:

- Operation Snowstorm exposed a criminal network that used its inside knowledge of the aviation sector to bypass border inspections and airport security measures at John F. Kennedy International Airport. Through the use of wiretaps and other techniques, investigators uncovered a sprawling network of corrupt airport employees who, for roughly a decade, had capitalized on their airport access to smuggle in large quantities of cocaine and marijuana. In total, more than 200 kilograms of cocaine and 300 kilograms of marijuana were seized, along with more than \$500,000, five luxury vehicles, and several weapons. The case was one of the first wiretap investigations involving employees at a major U.S. airport.
- Operation Caribbean Loot targeted the money laundering and narcotics trafficking activities of Jean Eliobert Jasme, resulting in the complete dismantling of Jasme's organization. Jasme was, until his capture, one of the most notorious drug traffickers in the Caribbean. He received large cocaine shipments from Colombia and Haiti, where his organization repackaged the loads and smuggled them aboard vessels destined for the U.S. Due to the collaborative efforts of prosecutors and agents from ICE and DEA, Jasme and eleven other targets were successfully prosecuted. Agents recovered more than \$11 million during the course of the investigation. Prosecutors were able to secure the forfeiture of millions more.
- Operation Meltdown targeted the money laundering activities of a Colombia-based criminal organization with links to the Cali drug cartel. The investigation revealed that numerous businesses in the New York Diamond District were laundering narcotics proceeds by accepting narco-dollars in exchange for gold. The gold was then smuggled out of the U.S.

and sold in Colombia to gold refiners. The Colombian refiners, who were part of the scheme, would buy the gold at black market prices then resell it to U.S.-based refiners at the regulated market rate. As a result of the investigation, 23 individuals were arrested in the U.S. and Colombia, and more than \$7.5 million in cash, gold and diamonds was seized or forfeited.

In addition to ICE, agents and officers of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Marshal Service, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Danbury, Conn., Miami Metro Dade, New York, New York Port Authority, and Norfolk, Va., Police Departments, New Jersey National Guard, New York State Police, and the Toronto Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit were recognized, along with prosecutors from the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Offices in New York and New Jersey, New York State Attorney General's Office, and the office of the Attorney General of Mexico. The names of the law enforcement personnel who received the awards were not released due to ongoing investigative concerns.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.